

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 01285 01 OF 02 150111Z
ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-08 COME-00 L-03 H-01
SMI-01 IO-13 INT-05 CEQ-01 EPA-01 SS-15 NSC-05
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O 150100Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6648
AMCONSUL HALIFAX POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OTTAWA 01285

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIS, CA
SUBJECT: GOC EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT RESOLUTION ON
CANADIAN HARP SEAL HUNT INTRODUCED BY CONGRESSMAN JACK
KEMP.

1. SUMMARY. EXTERNAL AFFAIRS UNDER SECRETARY GOTLIEB
CALLED IN AMBASSADOR TO EXPRESS GOC CONCERN ABOUT WHAT IT
CONSIDERS TO BE SERIOUS INACCURACIES AND DISTORTIONS EM-
BODIED IN CONCURRENT RESOLUTION INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTA-
TIVE KEMP OF NEW YORK ON MARCH 9. GOTLIEB ASKED FOR AS-
SISTANCE OF DEPARTMENT OF STATE IN CONVEYING TO CONGRESS
GOC COMMENTS ON REPRESENTATIVE KEMP'S RESOLUTION. GOTLIEB
PROVIDED SERIES OF GOC COMMENTS INTENDED TO CORRECT THESE
INACCURACIES. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS DEPARTMENT HONOR GOC
REQUEST. END OF SUMMARY.

2. UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ALAN
GOTLIEB CALLED AMBASSADOR IN TODAY (MARCH 14) TO EXPRESS
GOC CONCERN ABOUT CONCURRENT RESOLUTION REGARDING CANADIAN
HARP SEAL HUNT INTRODUCED IN HOUSE MARCH 9 BY REPRESENTA-
TIVE JACK KEMP OF NEW YORK. GOC OBTAINED RESOLUTION TEXT
THROUGH WASHINGTON EMBASSY.

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PAGE 02 OTTAWA 01285 01 OF 02 150111Z

3. GOTLIEB TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT REPRESENTATIVE KEMP'S
RESOLUTION IS "RIDDLED WITH INACCURACIES," THAT IT "CON-
STITUTES AN INTRUSION INTO CANADIAN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS,"
AND THAT IT "UNJUSTIFIABLY CALLS INTO QUESTION CANADIAN
GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN FOR SURVIVAL OF HARP SEAL SPECIES."
GOTLIEB ASKED AMBASSADOR'S ASSISTANCE IN CORRECTING INAC-

CURACIES EMBODIED IN RESOLUTION.

4. AMBASSADOR COMMENTED THAT CONGRESS IS INDEPENDENT BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT. AMBASSADOR SAID, HOWEVER, THAT DEPARTMENT OF STATE MIGHT UNDERTAKE TO FURNISH CONGRESS WITH GOC COMMENTS ON PROPOSED RESOLUTION AND URGE THEIR CONSIDERATION. DEPT. SHOULD ADD ITS OWN INFO ON SEAL HUNT.

5. GOTLIEB TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT CANADIAN PARLIAMENT WOULD MAKE SEPARATE REPRESENTATION TO CONGRESS REGARDING REPRESENTATIVE KEMP'S RESOLUTION THROUGH U.S.-CANADA INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: GOTLIEB GAVE AMBASSADOR SERIES OF GOC COMMENTS ON POINTS RAISED IN TEXT OF REPRESENTATIVE KEMP'S RESOLUTION WITH REQUEST THAT DEPARTMENT OF STATE BRING THESE TO ATTENTION OF MEMBERS AND COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS CONCERNED WITH THIS LEGISLATION. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT DEPARTMENT HONOR GOC REQUEST.

7. TEXT OF GOC COMMENTS:

BEGIN TEXT.

STATEMENT 1: THE HARP SEAL HUNT FOR LANDSMEN IN THE GULF AREA AND ON THE FRONT AREA COMMENCES NOVEMBER 15 AND
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 OTTAWA 01285 01 OF 02 150111Z

CLOSES MAY 14. THE LARGE VESSEL HUNT IN THE GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE COMMENCED MARCH 1, 1978 AND ON THE FRONT AREA ON MARCH 10, 1978.

STATEMENT 2: THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY(REPRESENTING DENMARK) AGREED ON A 180,000 TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH FOR 1978, BASED ON THE BEST INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC ADVICE AVAILABLE, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE NORTHWEST ATLANTIC FISHERIES, STANDING COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND STATISTICS (STACRES). THE QUOTA IS FOR 180,000 SEALS: A QUANTITY LESS THAN THE SUSTAINABLE YIELD OF THE PRESENT POPULATION.

STATEMENT 3: IN NOVEMBER 1977 STACRES ESTIMATED THAT THE HARP SEAL PUP PRODUCTION IN THE NORTHWEST ATLANTIC WOULD BE BETWEEN 309,000-347,000 PUPS. AS HISTORICALLY 80 PERCENT OF THE HARP SEAL CATCH HAS BEEN PUPS, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT A MAXIMUM OF 144,000 PUPS WILL BE TAKEN THIS YEAR. THIS PREDICTED PUP CATCH COMPRISES 42-47 PERCENT OF THE PROJECTED NEW-BORN SEAL POPULATION.

STATEMENT 4: THERE ARE THREE KNOWN POPULATIONS OF HARP

SEALS IN EXISTENCE TODAY; ONE IN THE WHITE SEA, ONE TO THE EAST OF GREENLAND AND THE THIRD, THE NORTHWEST ATLANTIC POPULATION WHICH OCCURS OFF CANADA'S EAST COAST. ONLY VERY ROUGH PREDICTIONS OF HISTORICAL PRE-EXPLOITATION POPULATION SIZES ARE AVAILABLE. THERE MAY HAVE BEEN AS MANY AS 10 MILLION HARP SEALS IN THE WORLD (COMPROMISING ALL THOSE POPULATIONS) PRIOR TO EXPLOITATION. THE SEPTEMBER 1976 MEETING OF THE UN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION, ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MARINE RESOURCES RESEARCH, LISTED THE HARP SEAL AS THE SECOND MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES OF SEAL ON EARTH, NUMBERING SOME 1.8 MILLION IN THREE POPULATIONS.

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 01285 02 OF 02 150118Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 OTTAWA 01285

OUR BEST SCIENTIFIC ESTIMATE OF THE PRE-EXPLOITATION LEVEL OF THE HARP SEAL POPULATION IN THE NORTHWEST ATLANTIC IS BETWEEN 3 - 4 MILLION ANIMALS IN THE 1930'S. IT WAS REDUCED TO APPROXIMATELY 2 MILLION ANIMALS IN THE 1950'S AND TO 1 MILLION IN 1970. THIS HARP SEAL POPULATION HAS BEEN INCREASING SINCE 1971 TO 1.25 MILLION ANIMALS IN 1978, EXCLUSIVE OF PUPS BORN IN 1978.

STATEMENT 5: SEAL HUNTERS HARVESTED APPROXIMATELY 165,000 SEALS OF THE 170,000 SEAL QUOTA IN 1977. TWO REASONS ARE EVIDENT FOR THIS REDUCED CATCH. 1. THE LARGE VESSEL HUNT IN THE FRONT AREA, OFF NORTHEASTERN NEWFOUNDLAND, WAS DELAYED BY THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT FOR SEVERAL DAYS IN ORDER TO ATTEMPT A COMPLETE AERIAL ULTRA-VIOLET PHOTOGRAPHY SURVEY OF THE HARP SEAL HERD, AND 2. THE LANDSMEN'S COMPONENT OF THE HARP SEAL HUNT IN THE NORTHEASTERN AND NORTHWESTERN

NEWFOUNDLAND WAS TERMINATED ON MARCH 10, 1977 PRIOR TO THE CLOSED SEASON DATE IN ORDER TO PREVENT OVER-HARVESTING.

STATEMENT 6: STACRES AGREED IN NOVEMBER 1977 THAT THE CONSERVATIVE 180,000 TOTAL ALLOWABLE CATCH WILL PERMIT A CONTINUED INCREASE IN THE HARP SEAL POPULATION.
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PAGE 02 OTTAWA 01285 02 OF 02 150118Z

STATEMENT 7: THE HUMANE DISPATCHING OF YOUNG HARP SEALS IS BY THE SAME CLUBBING/EXSANGUINATION TECHNIQUE USED IN MANY NORTH AMERICAN ABATTOIRS FOR THE KILLING OF YOUNG CALVES AND LAMBS. IT IS THE SAME TECHNIQUE APPROVED AND UTILIZED BY THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IN HARVESTING NORTH PACIFIC FURSEALS ON THE PRIBILOF ISLANDS OF ALASKA, AND IS ACCEPTED BY AMERICAN AND CANADIAN HUMANE ORGANIZATIONS AS A FULLY HUMANE TECHNIQUE FOR THE SLAUGHTERING OF ANIMALS. THE TECHNIQUE PRODUCES IMMEDIATE AND IRREVERSIBLE UNCONSCIOUSNESS VIA A BLOW TO THE CRANIUM, WITH SUBSEQUENT DEATH INDUCED BY A MASSIVE DROP IN BLOOD PRESSURE CAUSED BY EXSANGUINATION OR BLEEDING-OUT.

STATEMENT 8: THERE IS NO FACTUAL BASIS FOR THE ASSERTION THAT 15 PERCENT OF THE HARP SEAL PUPS KILLING IN 1977 WERE CONSCIOUS WHEN SKINNED. IN ONE SMALL COMPONENT OF THE HARP SEAL HUNT DISCUSSED IN A REPORT BY VETERINARY PATHOLOGIST DR. H.C. ROWSELL, TEN OF 76 OLDER SEALS, HUNTED USING FIREARMS, EXHIBITED SOME SIGNS OF CONSCIOUSNESS WHEN BROUGHT ABOARD THE BOATS FROM WHICH HUNTING HAD OCCURRED. THESE WERE IMMEDIATELY DISPATCHED USING THE STANDARD CLUBBING/EXSANGUINATION TECHNIQUE, AND MOST CERTAINLY WERE DEAD OR UNCONSCIOUS PRIOR TO ANY INCISION AS IS REQUIRED BY THE CANADIAN SEAL PROTECTION REGULATIONS.

STATEMENT 9: GIVEN THE ABOVE POPULATION STATISTICS, AND THE FACT THAT THE POPULATION IS INCREASING, THE HARP SEAL HARDLY QUALIFIES AS AN ENDANGERED SPECIES.

RESOLUTION: THERE IS NO EVIDENCE WHICH MIGHT SUGGEST THAT THE WELL-CONTROLLED HARVESTING OF HARP SEALS IS EITHER CRUEL OR INHUMANE. TO THE CONTRARY, OBSERVATIONS BY
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PAGE 03 OTTAWA 01285 02 OF 02 150118Z

NUMEROUS VETERINARY PATHOLOGISTS, HUMANE SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES, AND SCIENTISTS CONCLUDE THAT THE HARP SEAL IS HARVESTED IN AN AS HUMANE, OR MORE HUMANE MANNER THAN

ANIMALS WHICH ARE KILLED IN ABATTOIRS FOR OUR SOCIETY'S
CONSUMPTION. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT THE
HARP SEAL IS IN THE SLIGHTEST DANGER OF EXTINCTION; TO
THE CONTRARY, IT IS THE SECOND MOST ABUNDANT OF ABOUT 30
SPECIES OF SEAL ON EARTH, AND ITS NUMBERS WILL CONTINUE
TO INCREASE UNDER OUR PRESENT MANAGEMENT REGIME. END OF
TEXT. ENDERS

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